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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

26 February 1968

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Budapest Preparatory Meeting Opens Today

The Budapest Preparatory Meeting begins today with a welcoming speech by Janos Kadar which reportedly will be broadcast. The meeting will then go behind closed doors where delegates from more than sixty communist parties will try to decide the ground rules for a potential world conference. Eastern European and Soviet delegations are given in Annex. Delegations from other countries will be given by area in successive Intelligencers.

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USAFE Warns of Possible Harassment of Berlin Air Access

US Air Force in Europe (USAFE) Headquarters reported on 20 February that two "possible" air harassment incidents occurred on 17 February, and commented that an official protest had been made to the Soviets. USAFE reported these incidents in a cable in which it stated that it was upping its estimate to "probable" "that the Soviets will initiate carefully controlled and limited harassment of air and ground access" to Berlin "in the period proceeding and during" the 4-8 March Bundestag Week in West Berlin. Left unsaid, but clearly implied by USAFE, was that the two air "incidents" may have been the beginning of the air harassment.

The US Mission in Berlin, however, has pointed out that the British (BEA planes were involved in the incidents) dismissed one "incident" completely and merely informed the Soviets in the Berlin Air Safety Center (BASC) of the facts concerning the other. They did not issue a formal protest. The three Allied controllers in BASC, moreover, consider the incidents to have been accidental. The Mission pointed out that, although it is possible that the Soviets have started to harass Allied corridor flights as a warning of what they plan to do in connection with the Bundestag Week, "it is not inclined at present to draw such a conclusion."

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COMMENT: [redacted] is not always the most prescient. We suspect that if the Soviets intend to harass air traffic--and there is no firm evidence suggesting they do--they will follow the "classical" and safer method of declaring off-limits to Allied traffic certain portions of the air corridors.

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Changes in Yugoslav Party Organization Debated

The first details of proposed major organizational changes in the Yugoslav communist party were surfaced in the 23 February Politika. An annual conference is proposed as the highest party organ between congresses. The present 154-member central committee would be reduced to 70 members, ten from each republic party and five from each autonomous provincial party. The new central committee would take over the policy-making functions of the presidium, which would be abolished. The executive committee would continue in existence, presumably still restricted to overseeing the execution of policy. [redacted]

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COMMENT: The proposed reorganization would help get rid of some conservatives by eliminating their central committee seats. The proposed method of apportioning seats in the new central committee parallels that used in selecting deputies to the federal legislature's chamber of nationalities and would make the party structure more confederal than it is now.

Bulgarian Party Members Protest Price Hikes

The party rank and file share the general dissatisfaction of the Bulgarian populace over the 1 January increase in consumer prices. [redacted]

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Party groups at all state enterprises and government institutions were told at a meeting on 31 December that certain price corrections amounting to an average price increase of five percent were necessary. When the shops opened on 2 January, however, it became evident that the average increase was closer to forty percent.

Public indignation, both inside and outside party ranks, reached violent proportions before it was brought under control by 29 January. Specific instances of violence included the

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beating of party officials, and noisy protest meetings and demonstrations at industrial plants, state enterprises and labor union centers. Some party members resented particularly the "vulgar stupidity" of the regime in not leveling with them at the 31 December meetings.

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COMMENT:

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Although the price hikes represent a decline in the Bulgarian standard of living, which had been creeping up, the population probably will reluctantly accept the price revisions.

Czechoslovak Cabinet Meeting

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The cabinet was to meet today to discuss the standard of living, plans for color television, and construction in the high Tatra Mountains.

COMMENT: Former party boss Novotny in his comments on the Dubcek regime's plans for economic reform appears to be trying to sow fear the reform will depress the standard of living. Presumably the Cabinet Meeting will try to dispel such fears. The color television discussion will probably be about whether to finally adopt the French SECAM system along with the Russians and the rest of Eastern Europe. There have lately been signs that the Soviets and East Germans are reluctant to do so because the SECAM system will be incompatible with the rest of the world's systems. The construction in the Tatra's is a sore subject for the Slovaks. They staged a street demonstration in Bratislava last week in support of building new facilities for housing and transportation in anticipation of the next winter Olympics, which will be held there. The Slovaks want the present antiquated system of transportation torn down and replaced with a monorail.

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NOTE: THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE REPRESENT ONLY THE ANALYSIS OF THE EE DIVISION

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INTELLIGENCER ANNEX

Soviet and Eastern European Party
Delegations to Budapest Meeting

Soviet Union

Mikhail Suslov, Politburo and Secretariat member
Boris Ponomarev, Secretariat member
K. V. Rusakov, head of CC Foreign Affairs Department

Bulgaria

Boris Velchev, Politburo and Secretariat member
Milko Balev, CC member
Konstantin Telalov, CC Foreign Affairs Department

Czechoslovakia

Vladimir Koucky, Secretariat member
Frantisek Kriegel, CC member
Oldrich Kaderka, head of CC Foreign Affairs Department
Michal Pecho, Slovak party secretary

East Germany

Erich Honecker, Politburo and Secretariat member
Hermann Matern, Politburo member
Hermann Axen, Secretariat member
Paul Markowski, CC International Relations Department

Hungary

Zoltan Komocsin, Politburo and Secretariat member
Frigyes Puja, chief of CC Foreign Affairs Department
Andras Gyenes, deputy chief of CC Foreign Affairs
department

Poland

Zenon Kliszko, Politburo and Secretariat member
Artur Starewicz, party secretary
Jozef Czesak, CC Foreign Affairs Department head
Andrzej Werblan, CC Science and Education Department
head

Rumania

Paul Niculescu-Mizil, Politburo, Executive Committee
and Secretariat member
Mihai Dalea, party secretary